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**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK**

Yngrid Jorge,

Plaintiff,

v.

International Recovery Associates, Inc.,

Defendant.

Case No:

COMPLAINT

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

Yngrid Jorge (“*Plaintiff*”), by and through the undersigned counsel, complains, states and alleges against International Recovery Associates, Inc. (“*Defendant*”), as follows:

INTRODUCTION

1. This action seeks to recover for violations of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1692, *et seq.* (the “FDCPA”).

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

2. This Court has federal subject matter jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331 and 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(d).

3. Venue is proper under 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b) because a substantial part of the events or omissions giving rise to the claim occurred in this Judicial District.

4. At all relevant times, Defendant conducted business within the State of New York.

PARTIES

5. Plaintiff Yngrid Jorge is an individual who is a citizen of the State of New York residing in Suffolk County, New York.

6. Plaintiff is a natural person allegedly obligated to pay a debt.

7. Plaintiff is a “consumer” as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(3).

8. On information and belief, Defendant International Recovery Associates, Inc., is a New York Corporation with a principal place of business in Suffolk County, New York.

THE FDCPA AS IT RELATES TO THE CLAIMS HEREIN

9. Congress enacted the FDCPA upon finding that debt collection abuse by third party debt collectors was a widespread and serious national problem. *See* S. Rep. No. 95-382, at 2 (1977) *reprinted in* U.S.C.C.A.N. 1695, 1696; 15 U.S.C § 1692(a).

10. The purpose of the FDCPA is to protect consumers from deceptive or harassing actions taken by debt collectors, with the aim of limiting the suffering and anguish often inflicted by independent debt collectors. *Kropelnicki v. Siegel*, 290 F.3d 118, 127 (2d Cir. 2002); *Russell v. Equifax A.R.S.*, 74 F.3d 30, 34 (2d Cir. 1996).

11. To further these ends, “the FDCPA enlists the efforts of sophisticated consumers ... as ‘private attorneys general’ to aid their less sophisticated counterparts, who are unlikely themselves to bring suit under the Act, but who are assumed by the Act to benefit from the deterrent effect of civil actions brought by others.” *Jacobson v. Healthcare Fin. Servs., Inc.*, 516 F.3d 85, 91 (2d Cir. 2008).

12. As such, the circumstances of the particular debtor in question have no bearing as to the question of whether there has been a violation of the FDCPA. *See Easterling v. Collecto, Inc.*, 692 F.3d 229, 234 (2d Cir. 2012). Indeed, it is not necessary for a plaintiff to show that he or she was confused by the communication received. *Jacobson*, 516 F.3d at 91. Likewise, the plaintiff consumer's actions or inaction in response to a communication from a debt collector are irrelevant. *Thomas v. Am. Serv. Fin. Corp.*, 966 F. Supp. 2d 82, 90 (E.D.N.Y. 2013).

13. Instead, “the test is how the least sophisticated consumer—one not having the astuteness of a ‘Philadelphia lawyer’ or even the sophistication of the average, everyday, common consumer—understands the notice he or she receives.” *Russell*, 74 F.3d at 34.

14. If a debt collector's communication is “reasonably susceptible to an inaccurate reading” by the least sophisticated consumer, it violates the FDCPA. *DeSantis v. Computer Credit, Inc.*, 269 F.3d 159, 161 (2d Cir. 2001). Similarly, a communication violates the FDCPA if it is “open to more than one reasonable interpretation, at least one of which is inaccurate,” or if the communication “would make the least sophisticated consumer uncertain as to her rights.” *Clomon v. Jackson*, 988 F.2d 1314, 1319 (2d Cir. 1993); *Jacobson*, 516 F.3d at 90.

15. The FDCPA is a strict liability statute, and a debt collector's intent may only be considered as an affirmative defense. 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(c); *Ellis v. Solomon & Solomon, P.C.*, 591 F.3d 130, 135 (2d Cir. 2010). Likewise, “the degree of a defendant's culpability may only be considered in computing damages.” *Bentley v. Great Lakes Collection Bureau*, 6 F.3d 60, 63 (2d Cir. 1993). A single violation of the FDCPA to establish civil liability against the debt collector. *Id.*

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

16. Defendant regularly collects or attempts to collect debts asserted to be owed to others.

17. Defendant is regularly engaged, for profit, in the collection of debts allegedly owed by consumers.

18. The principal purpose of Defendant's business is the collection of such debts.

19. Defendant uses the mails in its debt collection business.

20. Defendant is a “debt collector” as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(6).

21. Defendant alleges Plaintiff owes a debt (“the alleged Debt”).

22. The alleged Debt is an alleged obligation of Plaintiff to pay money arising out of a transaction in which the money, property, insurance, or services which are the subject of the transaction are primarily for personal, family, or household purposes.

23. The alleged Debt does not arise from any business enterprise of Plaintiff.

24. The alleged Debt is a “debt” as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(5).

25. At an exact time known only to Defendant, the alleged Debt was assigned or otherwise transferred to Defendant for collection.

26. At the time the alleged Debt was assigned or otherwise transferred to Defendant for collection, the alleged Debt was in default.

27. In its efforts to collect the alleged Debt, Defendant contacted Plaintiff by calls to Plaintiff's telephone.

28. In its efforts to collect the alleged Debt, Defendant contacted Plaintiff by letters including the letter dated February 13, 2020. (the "Letter") (A true and accurate copy is annexed hereto as Exhibit 1).

29. The Letter conveyed information regarding the alleged Debt.

30. The Letter is a "communication" as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(2).

31. The Letter was received and read by Plaintiff.

32. 15 U.S.C. § 1692e protects Plaintiff's concrete interests. Plaintiff has the interest and right to be free from deceptive and/or misleading communications from Defendant. As set forth herein, Defendant deprived Plaintiff of this right.

33. Plaintiff's injury is "particularized" and "actual" in that the letter that caused the injury was addressed and sent to Plaintiff specifically.

34. Plaintiff's injury is directly traceable to Defendant's conduct, because Defendant sent the Letter.

35. A favorable judicial resolution of Plaintiff's case would redress Plaintiff's injury with damages.

36. The deprivation of Plaintiff's rights will be redressed by a favorable decision herein.

37. Plaintiff has been misled by Defendant's actions.

38. Plaintiff justifiably fears that, absent this Court's intervention, Defendant will continue to use abusive, deceptive, unfair and unlawful means in its attempts to collect the Debt.

39. Plaintiff justifiably fears that, absent this Court's intervention, Defendant will ultimately cause her unwarranted economic harm.

40. As a result of Defendant's conduct, Plaintiff was forced to hire counsel and therefore has incurred damages including reasonable attorneys' fees in reviewing Plaintiff's rights under the law and prosecuting this claim.

41. As a result of Defendant's conduct, Plaintiff's counsel was forced to expend time and money to investigate the enforceability of the Debt.

42. Upon information and belief, Plaintiff can prove that all actions taken by Defendant as described in this Complaint were taken willfully, with either the desire to harm Plaintiff with knowledge that its actions would very likely harm Plaintiff, and/or with knowledge that its actions were taken in violation of the law.

43. 15 U.S.C. § 1692e provides, generally, that a debt collector may not use any false, deceptive, or misleading representation or means in connection with the collection of any debt.

44. 15 U.S.C. § 1692e(2)(A) prohibits the false representation of the character, amount, or legal status of any debt.

45. 15 U.S.C. § 1692e(10) prohibits the use of any false representation or deceptive means to collect or attempt to collect any debt.

46. The Letter claims that Plaintiff owed \$1,400.00 (the “Claimed Amount”).

47. Plaintiff did not owe the Claimed Amount.

48. Plaintiff owed an amount less than the Claimed Amount.

49. Defendant overstated the amount owed by Plaintiff.

50. An overstatement of the amount of a debt is a false representation made in connection with the collection of any debt, in violation of 15 U.S.C. § 1692e, 1692e(2)(A) and 1692e(10).

51. An overstatement of the amount of a debt is a deceptive, misleading and false representation made in connection with the collection of any debt, in violation of 15 U.S.C. § 1692e, 1692e(2)(A) and 1692e(10).

52. Defendant's overstatement of the amount owed by Plaintiff – specifically, that Plaintiff owed the Claimed Amount when Plaintiff owed an amount less than the Claimed Amount – is a false, deceptive, and misleading representation made by Defendant in connection with Defendant's collection of the alleged Debt, in violation of 15 U.S.C. § 1692e, 1692e(2)(A) and 1692e(10).

53. For the foregoing reasons, Defendant violated 15 U.S.C. §§ 1692g(a)(1), 1692e, 1692e(2)(A) and 1692e(10) and is liable to Plaintiff therefor.

JURY DEMAND

54. Plaintiff hereby demands a trial of this action by jury.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff respectfully requests judgment be entered as follows:

- a. Finding Defendant's actions violate the FDCPA; and
- b. Awarding Plaintiff statutory damages in the amount of \$1,000.00 as provided under 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(a)(2)(A); and
- c. Awarding Plaintiff's the costs of this action and reasonable attorneys' fees as provided under 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(a)(3); and
- d. Awarding Plaintiff such other and further relief that the Court determines is just and proper.

DATED: February 11, 2021

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